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NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD™

AFTERMATH #8

AVATAR™

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HEY! I'M NOT DONATING BLOOD HERE. HOW MUCH ARE YOU TAKING?

TWO HUNDRED MILL. IT'S REGULATION. WE NEED TO RUN A NUMBER OF TESTS.

WHO'S THE GUY WITH THE STEEL ROD UP HIS BUTT.

STEEL--?

MY NAME IS COLONEL FRANKLIN CYRUS. I'M POST COMMANDER HERE AT RED ROCK.

CYRUS

US ARMY

I'M SURE YOU'RE ALL RELIEVED TO FIND A SAFE HAVEN FROM THE CHAOS THAT HAS BEFALLEN OUR GREAT COUNTRY.

HOWEVER--

--YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THIS IS *NOT* A HOLIDAY CAMP. IT IS A TOP SECRET MILITARY AND SCIENTIFIC SITE. AND THE REGULATIONS IN FORCE ARE THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

FOR THE NEXT FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, YOU WILL BE HELD IN SECURE CONFINEMENT WHILE YOUR PHYSICAL CONDITION IS ASSESSED.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? PHYSICAL CONDITION? WE'RE ALL HEALTHY.

I SEE WE HAVE AN ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR GOVERNMENT AMONG US.

I EXPECT YOU TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE, SENATOR PAXMAN. YOU WILL OF COURSE COMPLY WITH OUR REGULATIONS.

OF COURSE. BUT I DON'T SEE WHY--

--THERE'S A CHANCE SOME OR ALL OF YOU MAY BE INFECTED WITH THE UNDEAD VIRUS.

YOU'RE KIDDING. YOU HAVE THE FACILITIES HERE FOR A STANDARD BLOOD TEST. THAT DOESN'T TAKE MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES.

OUR MEDICAL EXPERTS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE EXISTING TESTS MAY BE FLAWED, HENCE THE FACT THAT THE EPIDEMIC HAS SPREAD FAST AND FURIOUS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

THERE IS NOW A MANDATORY QUARANTINE PERIOD OF FORTY-EIGHT HOURS.

CYRUS

U.S. ARMY

"YOU'LL BE SHOWN TO YOUR SECURE ACCOMMODATION AS SOON AS THE NURSE HAS FINISHED WITH YOU."

I KNEW IT!

DIDN'T I SAY THEY'D LOCK US UP AS SOON AS WE WALKED INTO THIS PLACE.

WHERE'S STANISLAV?

ANYONE SEEN HIM? WAS HE WITH US WHEN THEY TOOK THE BLOOD SAMPLES?

NOBODY SAW HIM?

SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT HERE.

YOU DID WELL, VANEK. THERE'S PLENTY OF MEN WOULDN'T HAVE THE BALLS TO DO WHAT YOU DID.

I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE, COLONEL. THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN NATION HAS TO BE WORTH THE SACRIFICE OF A FEW LIVES.

MORE THAN ELEVEN, UNFORTUNATELY. WE HAVE VERY FEW TEST SUBJECTS LEFT AND WE MAY NEED DOZENS MORE.

OUR WORK ISN'T PROGRESSING AS WELL AS WE HOPED.

I'LL SEE TO IT YOUR SERVICE IS RECOGNIZED IN THE APPROPRIATE PLACES.

I'LL REST UP OVERNIGHT AND GET BACK ON THE ROAD TOMORROW. THAT SUIT YOU?

HAPPY TO DO IT.

I BELIEVE HE *IS* HAPPY.

THE MAN IS A PSYCHOPATH.

COLONEL, MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU, SIR?

SOMETHING WRONG, SERGEANT?

SOME OF THE MEN AREN'T TOO HAPPY. THERE'S A SERVING MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY WITH THE NEW INTAKE.

FAIR POINT. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT HIM.

KIDD

US ARMY

LYRUS

US ARMY

PRIVATE JEFFERSON. THE POST COMMANDER WANTS TO SEE YOU.

BRING YOUR KIT.

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

I WANT TO KNOW WHY HE IS BEING TAKEN AWAY AND WHERE YOU'RE KEEPING THE MAN WHO BROUGHT US HERE.

I SAW YOU ON THE TV ONE TIME.

DIDN'T LIKE YOU ONE BIT.

PRIVATE JEFFERSON, REPORTING AS ORDERED SIR.

AT EASE, PRIVATE.

SERGEANT KIDD TELLS ME YOU SERVED A TWO-YEAR TOUR OF DUTY IN VIETNAM.

YES, SIR.

COLONEL CYRUS

YOU MUST HAVE SEEN SOME THINGS OUT THERE.

YES SIR. I SAW SOME THINGS, SIR.

AND I'M GUESSING YOU'VE SEEN SOME THINGS RIGHT HERE ON AMERICAN SOIL IN THE PAST FEW DAYS.

YES SIR.

WELL, YOU'RE GOING TO SEE SOME MORE, PRIVATE. WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SHOW YOU IS CLASSIFIED.

CYRUS

VERY *HIGHLY* CLASSIFIED.

WELL, PRIVATE, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK THOSE ARE ZOMBIES, SIR.

VERY *HUNGRY* ZOMBIES.

DR. SELENS IS CONDUCTING TESTS TO SEE IF THEIR DIETARY HABITS CAN BE MODIFIED.

I'M TRYING TO STOP THEM FROM EATING US.

HEY, DEADHEADS! CHOW TIME!

WOULD IT SURPRISE YOU TO LEARN THAT BOY WASN'T INFECTED BY A ZOMBIE?

SIR?

HE WAS DELIBERATELY TURNED. DR SELENS INJECTED HIM WITH THE VIRUS.

JEFFERSON

US AY

LYRUS

US ARMY

IT'S ABSOLUTELY UNAVOIDABLE. WE'RE TESTING VACCINES--

--YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXCUSE YOURSELF, DOCTOR. WE ARE ALL UNDER ORDERS FROM THE VERY HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE LAND TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS CRISIS.

US ARMY

THE UNDEAD SHOW NO INTEREST IN THE CONSUMPTION OF THEIR OWN KIND ALTHOUGH THE CORPSE IS FRESH.

LET'S TRY THE WEEK-OLD HUMAN.

"THIS SUBJECT DIED SEVEN DAYS AGO. THE CORPSE WAS NOT REFRIGERATED AND WITH THE AMBIENT TEMPERATURE AT AROUND 85 DEGREES, THE BODY DISPLAYS QUITE ADVANCED PUTREFACTION.

"THE UNDEAD SHOW SOME MILD INTEREST. SOME ARE FEEDING IN A DESULTORY FASHION. OTHERS ARE WANDERING AWAY."

"SUBJECTS SHOW SOME INCREASE IN APPETITE WHEN OFFERED A FRESH HUMAN CORPSE. THIS IS AN ATTEMPTED ESCAPEE, KILLED YESTERDAY, THE BODY KEPT IN COOL CONDITIONS.

"LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY ENCOUNTER A LIVING FOOD SOURCE.

"THE SUBJECTS SHOW NO INTEREST WHATEVER IN THE SNAKES THAT WERE CONCEALED INSIDE THE CORPSE. CONCLUSION-- THE UNDEAD DO NOT CONSIDER REPTILES AS FOOD.

"THE FINAL TEST IS A LIVE CHIMPANZEE-- THE MAMMAL THAT MOST CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE HUMAN SPECIES."

WELL. THEY SEEM TO PREFER THEIR FOOD LIVING. AT LEAST IN THE CASE OF A CHIMPANZEE. OF COURSE, IN GENETIC TERMS, A CHIMPANZEE IS MORE THAN NINE-TENTHS HUMAN.

SO CAN YOU PERSUADE THEM TO SWITCH TO EATING MONKEYS?

IF I CAN ANALYSE PRECISELY WHAT IS STIMULATING THEIR APPETITE, I MAY BE ABLE TO DEVELOP A VACCINE THAT WILL CANCEL OUT THAT STIMULUS.

MAKE HUMANS TASTE BAD.

SO THEY'LL HAVE TO BITE US TO FIND OUT THEY DON'T LIKE US?

NOT THE TASTE.

THE *SMELL.*

NOW YOU KNOW THE NATURE OF THE EXPERIMENTS. WE LURE CIVILIANS TO RED ROCK, THEN WE INFECT THEM WITH LETHAL DISEASES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE.

I'M NOT SAYING IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME. SOMETIMES I FEEL SICK TO MY STOMACH, BUT THIS WORK IS VITAL TO THE NATION'S PEACE AND SECURITY.

LYRUS

US ARMY

SO HOW DO *YOU* FEEL ABOUT IT, SOLDIER?

COULD YOU TAKE THOSE PEOPLE YOU CAME IN WITH AND PUT THEM IN THAT ARENA WITH THE DEADHEADS?

I DID WORSE IN THE 'NAM.

I HEAR YOU, SON.

CYRUS

TAKE A LOOK HERE.

CELL 12

BEFORE THIS LATEST OUTBREAK WE ONLY USED DEATH ROW INMATES WHO VOLUNTEERED FOR SCIENTIFIC TESTS.

THIS IS THE LAST OF THEM.

THEY AIN'T NEVER LETTING US OUT OF HERE.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT. YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY--

--YOU HEARD THE WAY THAT SOLDIER TALKED TO THE SENATOR. NO WORKADAY GRUNT IS GOING TO TALK TO A UNITED STATES SENATOR LIKE THAT UNLESS HE ***KNOWS*** THERE'LL NEVER BE PAYBACK.

THAT'S AN EXAGGERATION, BUT I TEND TO AGREE THAT THEY AREN'T LIKELY TO GIVE US FREE RUN OF THIS BASE.

YOU EVER HEAR OF RED ROCK BEFORE STANISLAV TOLD US ABOUT IT?

NO. MY GUESS IT'S SOME KIND OF COVERT OPERATION.

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL US ALL.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S A USEFUL COMMENT, MIKE.

I DON'T GIVE A FLYING ***FUCK*** WHAT YOU THINK, SENATOR.

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, DAD. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO LET US GO.

WHY NOT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THEY'RE AMERICANS. WE'RE *ALL* AMERICANS. WHY WOULD THEY HURT US?

THIS IS A TOP SECRET MILITARY BASE. WE'VE SEEN SOMETHING WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO.

IF WE'RE GOING TO BREAK OUT OF HERE, WE NEED TO DO IT FAST. THEY SAID THEY'RE ONLY HOLDING US FOR TWO DAYS. THEY WON'T EXPECT US TO DO ANYTHING IN THAT TIME.

AFTER THAT THEY'LL BE WATCHING US LIKE HAWKS.

THIS IS CRAZY TALK. WHAT IF THEY *ARE* GOING TO LET US OUT?

HOW DO YOU SUGGEST WE ESCAPE, VIC? DIG A TUNNEL?

WHEN THEY BRING OUR FOOD, GRAB A GUN. TAKE HOSTAGES, DEMAND OUR VEHICLES BACK.

SHOOT *SOMEONE* TO SHOW WE MEAN BUSINESS.

THERE WILL BE NO HOSTAGE TAKING AND THERE WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE NO SHOOTING.

THE SENATOR ONLY LIKES TO SHOOT HYSTERICAL WOMEN, RIGHT, PAXMAN?

I MADE A JUDGMENT CALL, MIKE. AND IT'S JUST POSSIBLE I SAVED YOUR LIFE AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S LIFE.

DON'T DO THAT.

DO NOT PAINT YOURSELF AS A HERO BECAUSE YOU SHOT THE WOMAN I LOVE IN FRONT OF MY EYES.

MIKE--

DON'T CALL ME MIKE. MY FRIENDS CALL ME MIKE. YOU CALL ME *MISTER* WOODFORD.

BETTER YET, JUST DON'T SPEAK TO ME AT ALL.

YOU ALL HAVE TO STOP THIS. WE NEED TO GET ALONG TOGETHER OR WE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE DIED BACK THERE IN VEGAS WITH ALL THE OTHERS.

GOD SAVED US FOR A PURPOSE.

HALLE-FUCKING-LUJA.

WE DON'T NEED TO CONCERN OURSELVES TOO MUCH WITH THIS BUNCH OF MISFITS. THEY'RE TOO BUSY SQUABBLING AMONG THEMSELVES TO CAUSE ANY TROUBLE.

HOW ABOUT JEFFERSON, SIR?

HOW'S HE SHAPING UP?

I KNOW A GOOD SOLDIER WHEN I SEE ONE. PRIVATE JEFFERSON WILL SERVE HIS COUNTRY WELL.

CYRUS

US ARMY

EVEN SO--

--KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON HIM.

KIDD

US ARMY

DR SELENS? ARE WE READY TO ROLL?

READY AND WAITING, COLONEL.

LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD.

THE COLONEL HAS JOINED US. YOU CAN OPEN THE DOORS.

THE UNDEAD ARE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE CHIMPANZEES AS EXPECTED. NOW LET'S MAKE THIS MORE INTERESTING.

WE'LL GIVE THEM A CHOICE OF MAIN COURSES. CAPTIVE CHIMP--

"--OR A LIVE AND KICKING HUMAN."

HEY, BANNERMAN. WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO GO UP AGAINST SIX DEADHEADS UNARMED.

HERE--

IT LOOKS LIKE HUMAN TRUMPS CHIMPANZEE, EVEN WHEN THE CHIMP IS SERVED UP ON A PLATE AND THE HUMAN IS READY TO PUT UP A FIGHT.

SURELY WE ALREADY KNEW THAT.

IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D ALMOST IMAGINE YOU WERE DOING THIS FOR THE FUN OF IT, DOCTOR.

CYRUS

US ARMY

DO YOU WANT TO GET HIM OUT OF THERE?

I'M NOT GOING TO RISK THE SAFETY OF MY MEN FOR THAT MURDERING SCUM. HE WAS SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR HIS CRIMES.

LET JUSTICE BE DONE.

HINE
AIRA
URDINOLA
2013

WEREN'T THEY THE LAST OF OUR UNDEAD?

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO TURN SOME OF OUR NEW INTAKE SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED.

CYRUS

US ARMY

TO BE CONTINUED...